Gazing Back... to two issues of the AKC Gazette Covers Featuring Berners

Gazing Back...
... at AKC Gazette columns
BY JULIA CRAWFORD

FOR THIS FALL ISSUE of *The Alpenhorn,* we'll gaze back to two issues of the *AKC Gazette* that showcased the Bernese Mountain Dog on its cover. The first was in December 1986. The special fold-out cover revealed Pamela Powers' delightful rendition of a sleeping Berner with three puppies snuggled at her side. The "On Our Cover" description written by the artist noted, "For me the holidays signify family, especially mother love. The Bernese mother and her pups are an ideal representative of this theme. They are a breed of distinctive beauty and warmth." Of her illustration, she continued, "It was challenging to paint these dogs in a manner so characteristic of their nature - loving, protective and faithful."

The second appearance of a Berner on the Gazette's cover was the February 1996 issue. It was a photograph by Berndt Gunter, whereas the first had been from a painting by Pamela Powers. The 1996 cover photo was a magnificent head study with a dusting of snow on an unidentified BMD whose broadness of head and muzzle clearly was of a male. Although the *Gazette* cover of that February 1996 issue was of a BMD, it did not include the Working Breed Columns. The December '86 issue with its fold-out cover of a mother Berner and three puppies did have the Working breed columns. The following is an excerpt from the BMD column in that 1986 issue which focused in part on the BMDCA's presentation of the *Gaines Award for Outstanding Sportsmanship* to Dr. Mary Dawson in recognition of her outstanding service to the BMDCA.

"It is easier to maintain the appearance of the breed than its character. It is essential that a healthy balance be maintained between appearance and character."

Mary Dawson, 1986

BMDCA Presents Gaines Award [1986]

"In recognition of outstanding service to the BMDCA, its Board of Directors selected Dr. Mary Dawson, Valencia, PA to receive the Gaines Award for Outstanding Sportsmanship. Mary's service record for the BMDCA traces to the inception of the club in 1968. Over the years she has served as president, vice-president, treasurer, and board member. Since the early 1970's, she has been Publications Chairman. In that capacity, she has prepared the BMDCA Yearbooks which are an invaluable source of information. Mary also served on the Slide Show Committee. Additionally she is a member of the Schweitzerishche Klub fuer Berner Sennenhunde. At present [1986], Mary is on the Board of Directors of the Western Pennsylvania Kennel Club. In her professional life, Mary

"For me the holidays signify family, especially mother love. The Bernese mother and her pups are an ideal representative of this theme. They are a breed of distinctive beauty and warmth."

Pamela Powers , 1986

is Curator of Vertebrate Fossils at Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Edinburgh, Scotland, and obtained her PhD from the University of Kansas."

That August 1986 column included a section on Mary's many contributions to the breed through her dogs. Particularly noteworthy is that it was her Swiss import, Ch. Zyta v Nesselacker, who won the first BMDCA National in 1976.

Mary Dawson's "Thoughts for the Future" [1986]

"When asked about her concerns for the breed's future, Mary commented, 'It is easier to maintain the appearance of the breed than its character. It is essential that a healthy balance be maintained between appearance and character.' In addressing a solution, she stated, 'Breeders are virtually historians of their chosen breed.' She went on to say, 'A remarkable part about this breed is that when one becomes involved with it, it usually results in a life-long commitment.' Mary has certainly proven this by example. We commend her."

Addenda: Years later, I discovered that Mary had been a student at the University of Kansas (KU) in Lawrence, Kansas. She was friends with a Rose Greaves who was a graduate student in one of the history of England classes that my grandfather taught at KU. To that coincidence, I add that when I got my first Berner in 1968, buying the breed without ever having seen one in real life, it came as a shock to me that on sharing the news of getting a Bernese with my grandmother in Lawrence, Kansas, her enthusiastic response was, "Oh, I know what they are! Mary Dawson has one." It came as quite a surprise to me that my grandparents knew Mary and had learned about such a rare breed from her.

About the Author: *Julia Crawford and her sister, Elizabeth, have been actively involved with the sport of dogs all of their lives as a serious avocation, never a business. Owning Berners since 1968, they retired from breeding in 2008. Julia was awarded in 1994 the BMDCA's Outstanding Service Award, and in 2007 was selected by the Salisbury Maryland Kennel Club to receive the AKC Outstanding Sportsmanship Award. She served as the AKC Gazette's BMDCA breed columnist for thirty-nine years, beginning in August 1979. This year, with the approval of the BMDCA Board, she passed the job of Gazette columnist over to Marjorie Geiger.*

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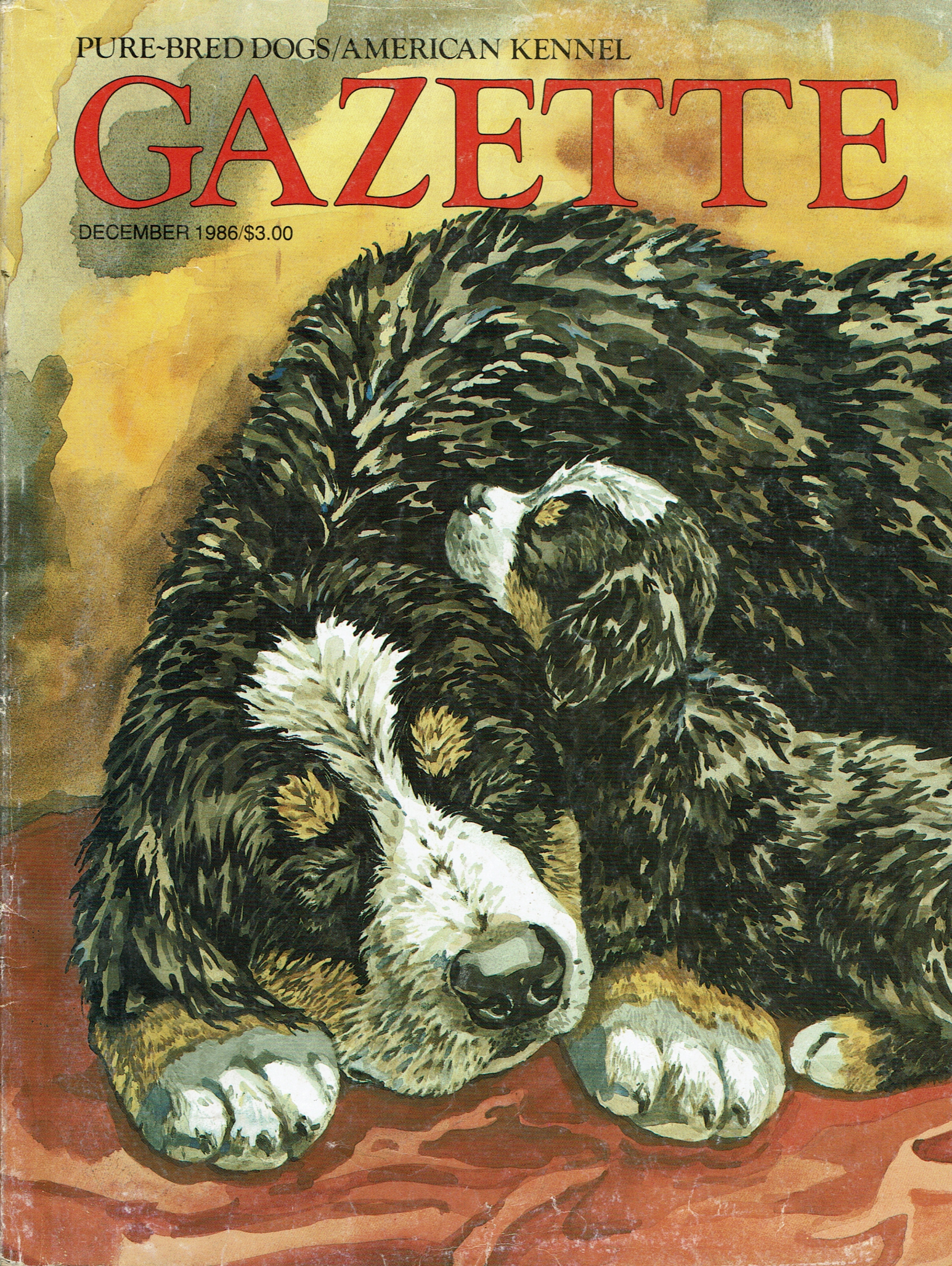

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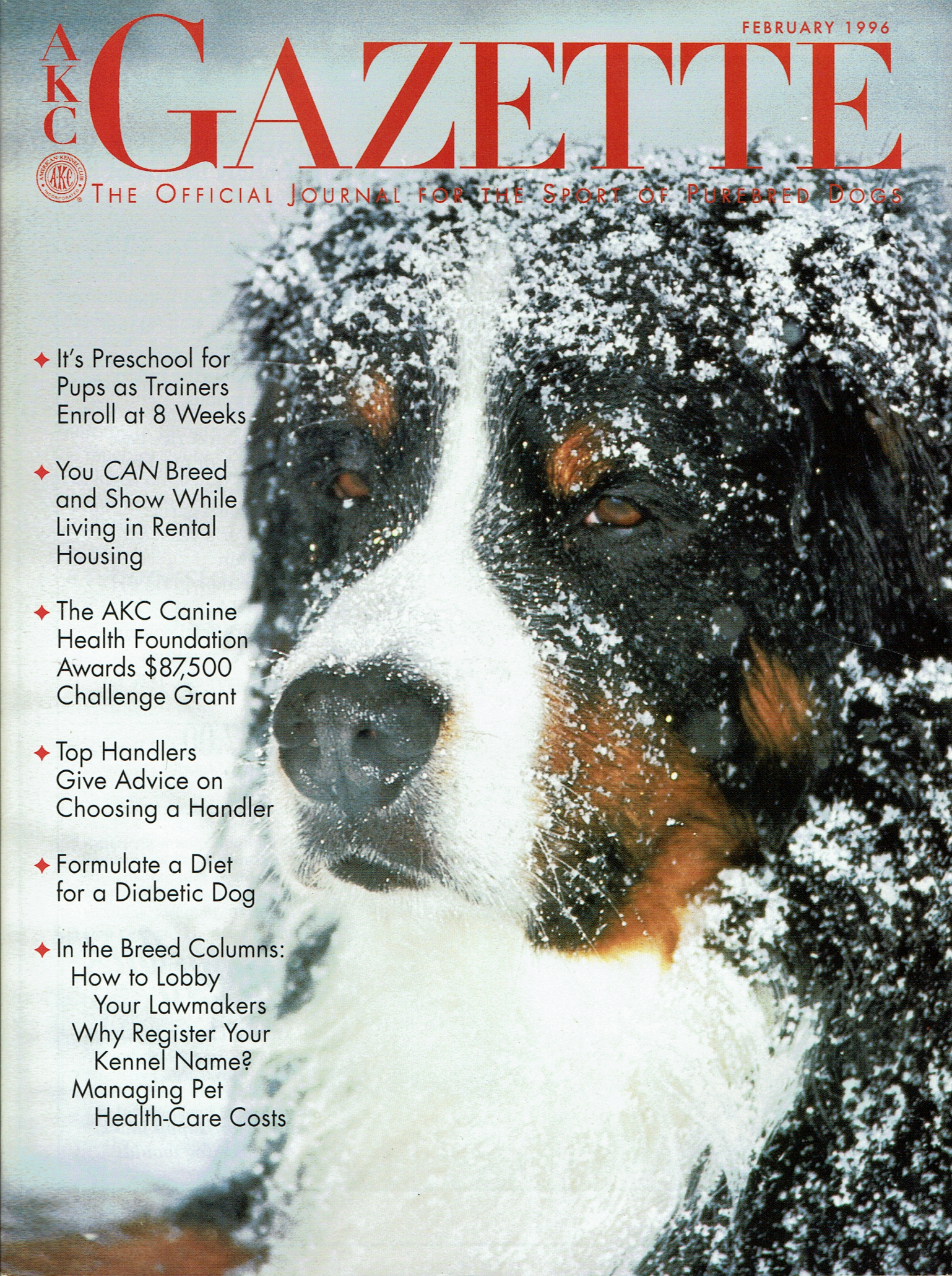

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◆ **See Page 1 for Changes in the Publishing of *Events Calendar*** ◆

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